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THE
CAUSES
OF THE
DISCONTENTS,
In Relation to the
PLAQUE,
AND
The PROVISIONS against it,

Fairly Stated and Consider'd.

By the Right Rev'd Edmund Gibson
Bishop of London.



L O N D O N :

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The true Causes of the DISCONTENTS, in relation to the PROVISIONS against the PLAGUE.



HE Plague and the Approach of it, is a very terrible Consideration, in the most favourable View that the Mind can form of it, and with the best Expedients that the Wit of Man can find, to prevent or check it. Whether we are to be shut up among infected Persons within our own Walls, and whole Families are in effect to be put under the Sentence of Death; or whether the infected Member is to be given up, and as it were sacrificed for the Safety of the rest; either Way, the Scene is very dreadful, and the Thought of it shocking to human Nature. And as it is in all desperate Cases, where the Nature of the Distemper requires uncommon Methods, and particularly where the Loss of a Member is to compound for Life; so will it be in this: The Hand that administers Help and performs the Operation, will be thought cruel, tho' it be never so evident, that nothing but that Cruelty stands between us and Death. I will add, That if in extreme Cases of this kind, Men

were left to their own Choice of an Expedient, either to prevent or cure; they would generally chuse that which is most indulgent to the Fears and Weaknesses of human Nature; that is, the very worst. Where the Disease is desperate, the Remedy must be so too; and to dwell upon *Rights* and *Liberties*, and the *Ease* and *Convenience* of Mankind, in case of a sudden Invasion, or the Plague hanging over our Heads, is as wild a Way of Reasoning, as if under a malignant Fever we should insist upon being dealt with in all respects like Men in perfect Health; or expect that our Merchandises should be preserv'd as sacredly in a Storm, as in the gentlest Gale; or should gravely insist *that our House is our Castle*, when the entring and blowing it up is necessary to stop the Progress of a raging Fire.

It is this Weakness in the Minds of Men (the not framing and adapting our Thoughts to the real Condition of Things, and, particularly, our reasoning upon a State of the greatest Danger because it is not just at Hand, as if we were in a

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State of the greatest Safety;) that makes ~~us to easily misled in these Causes of Extr~~emity; and to inveigh against our Superiors (what Course soever they take for our Safety) as bringing Hardships and Persecutions upon us; and, which is very natural, to dwell most upon the Inconveniencies of the Scheme that is most thought of and most likely to be executed, and to think any *other* more easy or tolerable.

These are the natural Products of human Frailty and Passion, when they get the better of Reason (as in such unusual Events, and dreadful Prospects, they are very apt to do;) and therefore these are Reproaches which the publick Legislature and Administration in every Country must expect of course, be their Deliberations and Resolutions for the publick Safety, ever so wise and sincere; because some one regular Expedient must be finally pitch'd on, and whatever is pitch'd on, is sure to work most terribly upon the Minds of the People.

But it is not to be conceiv'd or imagin'd, that the Passions of Men could be blown up and fomented to such a *Degree* as we have seen of late, without a great Mixture of Uneasinesses of other kinds, preparing them to receive ill Impressions; and without the Help of disaffected or designing Men, who have taken the Advantage of those Uneasinesses, some to run us into publick Confusion, and others to work their own private Revenge, by disgracing Men whom they did not like. Particularly, without great Help from Misrepresentations of *Facts*, and Misconstructions of the *Designs*, as well as *Actions*, of our Superiors, it seems impossible that Mankind should be so far blinded, as to declare it best to have thought of no Provision at all, and (I may add) to reckon the Provision that has been thought of, more terrible than the Plague it self; which yet has been our Case, and I doubt in some measure it is still.

My Design in this Paper, is not directly

to enter into the Merits of the Cause, by a nice Enquiry into the Nature and Operation of the several Expedients for preventing the Plague; for, God knows, every Expedient, when in our Thoughts we carry it into Execution, is so full of Terror, that it is enough to chill one's Blood to think of chusing *any* of them, if there were not a Necessity of chusing *some one*: But what I aim at, is to quiet the Minds of well meaning People, who have been misled by the Art and Knavery of others; and to let them see, how they have been impos'd upon and blown up to this uncommon Degree of Discontent and Uneasiness,

I. By gross Lies, and Misrepresentations of *FACTS*.

II. By unjust and uncharitable Suggestions concerning the *DESIGNS* of Persons.

III. By very false and unjust *REASONINGS* upon the *THINGS* themselves. And I doubt not in the least, but I shall attain my end, and free every impartial Mind from all Terrors (except such as necessarily and unavoidably attend so dreadful a Visitation, as the Plague is,) if they, on their part, will be so fair, as not to mix with this Head, their Discontents upon any other (which, how grievous soever in themselves, have not the least relation to this;) and, clearing their Minds from all *foreign Prejudices*, will prepare them to form a just and impartial Judgment upon this one Point.

I. As to the first Head (the *Lies* and Misrepresentations, which have been spread concerning this Matter;) because I will be very sure, while I am accusing others of Misrepresentation, to stand clear of the same Charge my self; I will give my Reader the three Clauses which have occasion'd so much Clamour, word for word, as they stand in the *Act* Safety repealed.

And

In relation to the Provisions against the Plague.

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And be it further Enacted, That if any Person infected with the Plague, or obliged to perform Quarentine, shall wilfully refuse or neglect to repair within convenient time, after due Notice for that Purpose given to him, her, or them, by the proper Officer, to the Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place duly appointed for him, her, or them; or having been placed in such Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place, shall escape, or attempt to escape out of the same, whilst he, she, or they shall continue infected, or before Quarentine fully performed respectively; It shall and may be lawful to and for the Watchmen and other Persons appointed to see Quarentine performed, by any kind of Violence that the Case shall require, to compel every such Person so refusing or neglecting, as aforesaid, and every such Person so escaping, or attempting to escape, as aforesaid, to repair or return into such Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place so appointed for him, or her, as aforesaid: and every such Person so refusing or neglecting to repair within convenient time after such Notice, as aforesaid, into such Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place appointed for him, or her, as aforesaid, and also every Person actually escaping, as aforesaid, shall be adjudged Guilty of Felony, and shall suffer Death as a Felon without Benefit of Clergy.

And be it further Enacted, That if any Person not infected, nor liable to perform Quarentine, shall presume to enter any Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place so appointed, as aforesaid, whilst any Person or Persons so infected, or being under Quarentine, shall be therein, and shall return, or attempt to return from thence, unless in such Cases, and by such proper Licence, as shall be directed or permitted by such Order or Orders, made or to be made and notified, as aforesaid, It shall and may be lawful to and for the Watchmen, or other Persons appointed to guard or secure such Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place, so appointed, as aforesaid, by any kind of Violence that the Case shall require, to compel such Person, so returning, or attempting to return, to repair into some Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place, so appointed, as aforesaid, there to continue and perform Quarentine; and in case such Person shall actually escape out of such Ship, House, Lazaret, or other Place, where he or she shall be so placed for Performance of Quarentine, before he or she shall have fully performed the same, he or she shall be adjudged guilty of Felony, and shall suffer Death as a Felon without Benefit of Clergy.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if at any time or times hereafter, any City, Town, or Place within Great Britain, or Ireland, shall be infected with the Plague, it shall and may be LAWFUL to and for his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, to cause one or more Line or Lines, Trench or Trenches, to be cast up or made about such infected City, Town, or Place, at a convenient Distance from the same, in Order to cut off the Communication between such infected City, Town, or Place, and the rest of the Country; and to prohibit all Persons, Goods, and Merchandizes whatsoever, to enter, pass, or be carried over such Lines or Trenches, unless in such Cases, and by such proper Licence, and subject to such Regulations and Restrictions for Performance of Quarentine, as shall be directed or permitted by any such Order or Orders, made or to be made and notified, as aforesaid; And in case any Person or Persons being within such Lines or Trenches, or any of them, shall, during the time of such Infection, presume or attempt to come out of the same, unless in such Cases, and by such proper Licence, and subject to such Regulations and Restrictions for Performance of Quarentine, as shall be directed or permitted by such Order or Orders, made or to be made and notified, as aforesaid; It shall and may be lawful to and for the Watchmen, or Persons appointed to guard or secure such Lines or Trenches, or any of them, by any kind of Violence that the Case shall require, to compel all and every such Person and Persons to return back within such Lines or Trenches; and in case any Person shall actually come out of such Lines or Trenches, or any of them (unless in such Cases, and by such proper Licence, and subject to such Regulations and Restrictions as aforesaid) every such Person shall be adjudged guilty of Felony, and suffer Death as a Felon without Benefit of Clergy.

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The proper *Methods of Reasoning* upon those three Clauses, and upon this whole Subject of the Plague, shall be stated in their proper place, under the third Head. But as to the truth of *Facts*, which is the Business of this Head; I would ask those who have been led blindfold by designing Men to join in the common Cry, Do they find, in any of these Clauses, a *Dragoon* planted at every one's Door? Do they find a *Knot of Dragoons* appointed to be Keepers of every House that has once been infected? In a Word, Do they find (what has been publish'd with so much Confidence) that none were to be employed in the Execution of that *Act*, but such as wore red Coats? Nothing like it. The Case in reality is this: Let what Scheme you will, be the Scheme that is pitch'd on, every thing must be done to make it effectual, that shall *then* appear necessary to be done; what will be necessary, no Mortal can tell, till the Time comes, and Expedients are tryed; and for these Reasons the *Powers* of doing must of necessity be *General*. But tho' it cannot be foreseen, what will do the Work in every Instance, I can easily foresee what would not do it to Satisfaction, in one Instance. Suppose the Plague should begin at *Gravesend*, and spread towards *London* (in which case, the City, it is to be hop'd, would think a Line on that Side very seasonable, and that nothing less could secure them against the desperate Pushes that would be made, to escape from the Part infected;) I dare say, they who are now loudest in the Clamour, would censure it as great Supineness in the Government, if they should trust the guarding of that Line, on which would depend the Fate of so many thousand Lives, to the Care and Courage of a Country Militia, or even of City Train'd-bands.

But that no *Military Force* of any kind was in the *primary Intention* of the Legislature, or design'd to be apply'd at all, except in case of *Necessity*, and after other Means were found ineffectual; appears evidently from a plain and express Clause in the *Act* it self; which the Promoters

of our Discontents have not thought fit to impart to the People, and that for a very plain Reason, because it would have been a full Confutation of all their malicious Suggestions upon this Head; and, being so, it shall be here inserted at length.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That during the present Infestation, and at all Times hereafter, when any foreign Country, or any part of Great Britain or Ireland shall be infected with the Plague, it shall and may be lawful to and for any two Justices of the Peace of any County, Riding, Division, or Liberty, next to such Place where any Ship or Vessel shall be performing Quarantine, or wherein any infected Place, or any House, Lazaret, or Place for Performance of Quarantine, shall be situate, or any Lines or Trenches shall be made, as aforesaid, and they are hereby required, from time to time, when any such Town or Place shall be infected with the Plague, or any Lines or Trenches shall be made, as aforesaid, or any Persons, Ships, Goods, or Merchandizes infected, or obliged to perform Quarantine, shall be put in any House, Lazaret, or other Place for Performance of Quarantine, To order the Inhabitants of such and so many Parishes, Townships, Vills, or Extrapolochial Places about the same respectively, as they shall judge necessary; and such Inhabitants are hereby required, in pursuance of such Orders, upon Notice thereof, to keep sufficient Watches by Day and Night upon such Town or Place so infected, and upon such Lines and Trenches made, as aforesaid, and upon such Houses, Lazarets, Ships, or other Places for Performance of Quarantine, for such Time, in such Manner, and with such Numbers of Watchmen at every Place, as the said Justices, by their said Order, shall direct and appoint.

And it is further provided by a subsequent Clause, *That the Watches by this Act before directed to be kept, shall be maintained at the Charges of the County or Riding, wherein such Watches shall be respectively kept.*

2. Among the Misrepresentations of Fact, is also to be mention'd The forcible removing of whole Families out of their Houses to perform Quarantine, in case any Member of it has been infected with the Plague ; which we have heard affirm'd and propagated with the greatest Confidence ; and yet it appears not to me to have any Foundation in the Act. That no Persons *within* the Lines, or belonging to any infected House, or entring such House, should be permitted to cross the Lines, or come abroad among their Neighbours, till they have submitted to proper Proofs that themselves are clear of the Plague ; all this is certainly no more than a just and prudent Care of the sound Part, and a necessary Expedient to hinder the spreading of the Infection. But that any Person uninfected, who should *choose* to keep within the Lines, or within his own House, was to be *forcibly* remov'd to a place of Quarantine, appears not upon the Face of the Act. And if it were possible for the Art of a Lawyer to *strain* such an Inference from the Act, as I verily believe it is not ; I would then appeal from that Art, to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, whether any Words can be found in the Act, that will fairly support such an Inference. It has been charg'd upon the Legislature as a Crime ; and certainly (like all other Crimes) it ought to be clearly proved, before it is imputed.

Before I shut up this Head, I must take Notice of one Representation more, which tho' not directly false, is very partial ; and that Partiality employed on purpose to give frightful and odious Colours to a thing, which, when the whole Truth is known, appears not only innocent, but wise. To make the drawing of Lines more terrible to the People, by Ideas of *Absolute Confinement*, and *Famine*, and the like ; it has been represented to them, that no Person, how clear soever of the Plague, was allow'd on any terms to pass the Lines, nor Provisions to be convey'd to them without the greatest Difficulty. Whereas, by the express Words of the Act, the Direction against crossing the Lines is temper'd by this prudent Exception, *Unless in such*

Cases, and by such proper Licence, and subject to such Regulations and Restrictions for performance of Quarantine, as shall be directed or permitted by any Order or Orders, made or to be made, and notified by the King's Proclamation. The plain meaning of which is, that if any Person who should be confin'd within Lines drawn cross the Country or round a City or Town, should first give proper Proof of his being uninfected, he should be furnish'd with Certificates of his having given such Proof, and might then be allow'd to cross the Lines, and go where he pleas'd. And as to the point of Provisions, and the probability that any City or Town infected, would be well or ill supply'd by their Neighbours ; can any thing be more clear and evident, than that every degree of Care in the Government to keep the Persons infected within certain Bounds, must be a proportionable degree of Encouragement to the Country round, to approach nearer to such City or Town, and to furnish it more freely and constantly with Provisions of all kinds ?

3. Another Art to make this Scheme terrible, has been the giving it an odious Name ; that it is a *FRENCH Scheme*, and taken, Step by Step, from *French Measures*, and is calculated only for a Country under *Arbitrary Government*. When, in truth, it is not a Scheme which the *French* chose from any relation it has, in the nature of it, to the Government they are under ; but the Scheme which they finally fell into upon evident Experience that others did not succeed : and if they had not fallen into it, in all human Probability the Plague, before this time, had overspread at least one half of that Kingdom, and perhaps this too. If we suffer so much by *French Folly*, may we not be allow'd to gain a little by *French Experience* ? When the Plague rages in any Nation, and the Neighbours are under Apprehension of it, and are making the best Provisions they can in case of its coming among them ; wou'd any Country upon Earth, but ours, think that they could take a wiser Course, than to make the most exact and diligent Enquiry, what Methods had been us'd, and which

which of them had been found most effectual, in the Country already infected? The separating the Sick from the Sound, as the best way of hindering an Infection to spread, is the Dictate of common Sense, confirm'd by universal Experience; and, because the French act agreeably to common Sense, are we to renounce it? Give me leave to add, what I verily believe is true, that at least two Thirds of those Men, who have been, and still are, so industrious in their Endeavours to disparage this Scheme, are the very Men, who, when time was, were the great Advocates for French Counsels, and French Measures; and whose Hearts al'd at every Advantage we gain'd towards reducing the Power of France; a Power, which if it had prevail'd, and these Men by Consequence could have had their Wish, was to have brought upon us a much sorcer Plague than what we now fear, I mean, the utter Destruction of our Religion and Liberties. Nor, at this day, woud they take half the Pains, or run half the Hazards, to keep out one Plague, that they would do to bring in the other.

4. But the greatest and most general Misrepresentation of Fact, by which these Men have labour'd to inflame the Nation, is, The confounding a Power to do, and a Necessity of doing; their telling the People, that the Act says, these Things shall be done, when it only says they may be done. After they had thoroughly prejudic'd the Minds of Men against the Scheme that was offer'd, they knew there would be a great Difference, in the Degrees of Dread and Apprehension, between an Evil that *must* come, and an Evil that only *may* come; and therefore, in order to finish their Work, it was necessary to have it believ'd, that this was the Scheme absolutely *fixed* and *determined* in all the Parts of it; that, which must take Place whatever happen'd, and which could neither be changed in the whole, nor receive Addition or Alteration in any Part. Whereas the Act did not establish, but only *suppose* the Scheme; as that, which the Legislature believed to be the most effectual, according to the best Judgment they

could form, upon a fair Comparison between this, and any other that had been offer'd or thought of; and in pursuance of that Supposition, they vested such Powers in the Prince, as seem'd most expedient to attain the Ends propos'd. But as the King was put under no *Necessity* by those Clauses of the Act, either to chuse that Scheme, or execute those Powers, but was left at full Liberty, all the while the Law was in force, to reject either, or both, if they should appear inexpedient; so was he, and still is, impower'd by another Clause in the same Act, to chuse any other Scheme, or any other Expedients, that shall hereafter appear to be more eligible.

That Clause of general Powers, is as follows:

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if at any Time or Times hereafter any City, Town, or Place within Great Britain, or Ireland, or the Isles of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, Sark, or Man, shall be infected with the Plague, and the same, upon Examination, shall be made appear to his Majesty, his Heirs or Successors, in Council, it shall and may be lawful to and for his Majesty, his Heirs and Successors, by and with the Advice of his or their Privy-Council, during the Continuance of such Calamity, to make such Orders and Regulations concerning Quarantine, and the prevention of Infection, as shall be necessary for the Safety and Preservation of his or their Subjects, and to notify the same by Proclamation; and all and every Person and Persons, Officer and Officers, Civil and Military, whatsoever, shall render due and exact Obedience to all such Orders and Regulations so made and notified, as aforesaid.

The King being vested with these General Powers (which met not with the least Opposition in either House of Parliament, so far as I have been able to learn;) it would much better become good Subjects, acted by a sincere Desire to promote the Safety of the Nation, to propose some more desirable Scheme, in a quiet and peaceable

peaceable Way ; than to content themselves (as they have generally done) to fly with Fury upon a Scheme that has been already propos'd, without substituting any other in the Place. This Scheme, it is true, had a Right for some time to plead Possession, as that which seem'd most agreeable to the Judgment of the Legislature ; but that Right (even while the A&t remain'd in full Force,) could last no longer than his Majesty pleased ; who in Virtue of the three first Clauses was only empower'd, not oblig'd ; and might, and still may, by Virtue of this last Clause, establish any other that shall appear more eligible. But, that any other is really more eligible, must be made appear by Reasoning, and not by Clamour ; by offering to the Consideration of our Superiors some better-concerted Scheme, in a modest and serious Way, and not barely by attacking and demolishing this in such an hostile and outrageous Manner as we have seen. Would any one of those who have acted such a part, agree to have his present Dwelling pull'd down, because another Man thinks it not convenient enough ; without any Security given, that he shall have a *better* built, or any regular *Plan* offer'd, on which to found a Comparison ?

But this immoderate Zeal in some to misrepresent Facts, and this very great Willingness in many others to believe such Misrepresentations ; shew plainly, that the preventing of the Plague, and preserving the Lives of their Fellow-Subjects, are not the Things which these Men aim at. And what it is, that is their real Aim, is shewn as plainly,

II. By their unjust and uncharitable Suggestions, concerning the DESIGNS of Persons, in relation to these Provisions against the Plague. This is a safe Retreat, when Lies and Misrepresentations are detected and can stand them in stead no longer. Facts, in their nature, are things open and before our Eyes, and false Accounts of *them* cannot be maintain'd long ; but DESIGNS are things hidden, and oft-

times disguis'd ; and where there is a Willingness to believe, and a Proneness to suspect the worst, the Jealousies and Prejudices founded upon those, are not so easily reach'd and subdu'd. If, for instance, it be spread with the greatest Confidence, that by a late A&t concerning the Plague, a Dragoon was to be posted at every Man's Door, that the Soldiers were to have the Plunder of all Houses which were infected, that they alone were to be employ'd in the Execution of the Powers given, and that the Powers themselves were such as *must* be put in Execution, and not such as *might* or *might not* be applied, according to the Exigencies of Things ; all these immediately vanish, upon producing the plain Words of the A&t. But if it be surmis'd, and propagated among the People, that the A&t it self was calculated on purpose to Enslave them, and that the Legislature and the Persons in Power, meant only an Opportunity to insult and oppress such Persons and Places as they did not like ; the Jealousies founded on such dangerous DESIGNS in the Superiors, are apt to take deeper Root in the Minds of the People, and, however unreasonable in themselves, can stand out much longer than Facts, against the plainest Conviction.

Such is the Nature of Mankind ; and designing Heads are never wanting, to help Nature, and to foment and blow up Jealousies on such Occasions ; especially, when they find the publick Administration engaged in any Work of great Difficulty, where the very best Remedies that can be thought of, are ungrateful and unpopular, and such as cannot possibly attain their End, without intrenching upon the ordinary Methods of Government, and the Ease and Liberty of Mankind. And therefore, in the present Case, what Scheme soever should have been thought of for preventing the Plague, I should not at all have wonder'd to hear the Legislature and those who are in Power, charg'd by the People with want of Regard to their Liberties, or with want of *Compassion*, or even with *Cruelty* ; but it is amazing, to hear

hear Men charg'd with meditating *Tyranny*, and *Revenge* in the midst of a Plague.

If we had a Monarch upon the Throne, aspiring in his Nature, or cruel in his Government; if an Augmentation of the military Force had been insisted on or demanded, under Colour of executing the Act; if those who are employed in his Service, were known to be Lovers of tyrannical and arbitrary Measures; there might then be some Colour for such Suggestions; tho' even then, to suppose Men capable of forming such Thoughts *in the midst of a Plague*, is to suppose them Madmen, and Monsters. But when the reverse of all this is true; when we have a Prince upon the Throne, most indulgent to his People, and most tender of their Liberties; and not one Soldier has been desir'd of the Parliament, beyond the Number allow'd for the ordinary Security of the Kingdom; when we have a Ministry, who in the whole Course of their Lives, have been the known Patrons of Liberty; and (what ought not to be forgotten) when they, who have the chief hand in forming and spreading these vile Aspersions, are the very Men who a few Years since were upon the point of sacrificing their Country to an Arbitrary Power: In these Circumstances, nothing can be more astonishing, than the *Confidence* of advancing such Suggestions; except it be, the giving Credit to them. And I must intreat those, who are real Friends to the present Government, but yet have been so far misled as to swallow such Suggestions, and to join in the common Clamour; to consider whose Work they are doing, and whether the Confusion into which our Enemies are labouring to cast us by these Methods, can, if they succeed, end in any thing but an Arbitrary Government.

No less shocking is it, to suppose Men capable of forming Designs of Oppression, or Revenge, in the midst of such a terrible Scene, as the Plague is. And however any Methods propos'd for preventing it, may be represented to the People as *Cruel*; there is not a greater Cruelty upon

earth, than to expose our Superiors to the People in such odious and inhuman Colours; it is in effect, to cloath them in the Habit of Bears and Tygers, that they may be run down and worried by the incens'd Multitude. If any thing could make me suspect human Nature capable of the Thoughts of Tyranny or Oppression, in the *midst* of a Plague; it is, that I see so many others who are capable of such unchristian Rancour and Revenge, under the *Approaches* of it.

I know but one thing that can be said, in any degree to mitigate the Guilt of such vile Reproaches (and it is, doubtless, one considerable Ingredient in them;) I mean, an approaching Election; when a Freedom of Slander, and especially against our Superiors, is claim'd as a kind of *Privilege*, and a part of *English Liberty*. But whatever Countenance Custom may have given to such Practices, they are at all times *inhuman* and *unchristian*; and yet I fear we must now despair to see them ever cur'd, when a Plague hanging over our Heads, is so far from extinguishing, that it revives and invigorates them.

Thus far, I have been shewing, how greatly false Representations of *Facts*, and unjust and uncharitable Constructions of the *Designs* of our Superiors, have contributed to blow up the Minds of Men to such an uncommon degree of *Uneasiness*, or rather *Fury*. To these I will now add a third Cause of it, *viz.*

III. The false measures and ways of REASONING, which Men have fallen into, in relation to the Plague, and the Provisions against it.

1. One is, That when they reason about these things, they will not suppose themselves, in their *Thoughts* and *Imaginations*, to be *now* under the Plague; but they consider it at a great Distance, and themselves and the Nation in a state of perfect Ease and Safety. This imaginary Security makes way for all those inflaming Suggestions, of Breaches upon Law, and Inroads upon Liberty; and puts Men out of

of all Patience, when you propose to them any Expedient that is accompanied with Terror, or even Inconvenience. But if they would first form within themselves an Idea and Imagination of our being actually *under* the Plague (as every one must do, who will reason wisely about Provisions to prevent it;) all those idle Speculations about Laws, and Liberties, and Conveniencies, would vanish: they would then see the absolute Necessity of discretionary Powers in the Prince, to be executed by wise Hands, and applied as Occasion shall require; and the Impossibility of keeping within the strict Bounds of Liberty, and the ordinary Methods of the Law. Upon the whole, they would see the Vanity of imagining, that any Methods can be taken in that dismal state, which shall not be attended with great Calamity and Terror. If those Men who indulge themselves in a different kind of Reasoning, would be at the trouble to read over the Account of the Plague at *Mar-selles*, and observe from thence the dismal Condition of things in such a state; I may venture to say, it would be impossible after that, to reason so wildly about it, as they have hitherto done.

2. But there is another mischievous Notion, for which Men are naturally prepared by their not reasoning in this matter, under the *Imagination* and *Impression* of the Plague actually among us; and that is, An Indifference whether any Expedients at all be thought of, to prevent or check it; nay, an Opinion that the stirring in it, and the proposing Expedients, is very mischievous, as it terrifies the Minds of the People, and gives a great Interruption to Trade and Business; and that therefore nothing of this kind ought to be stirr'd at all, till the Plague comes nearer. Now this is as contrary as any thing can possibly be, to all the Rules which Reason teaches, and Mankind practise, in the whole Conduct of Life. In every other Case, the more terrible the Danger, the greater is the Need of timely Preparation; to be not only in a constant *Readiness* for its coming, but jealous of every Ap-

proach of it. As to the Interruption to Trade and Business; is it not evident, that our Neighbour-Nations (who have been so early and diligent in their Preparations against the Plague) would be afraid to have any Trade, or even Correspondence with us, did not we also appear to make all proper and reasonable Provisions against it? And as to terrifying the People; if the making such Provisions be a thing fit, and wise, and necessary; those Terrors are not to be regarded, but ought to be treated as the Fears of Children, when they refuse to take such Remedies, or to submit to such Operations, as are necessary to preserve Life. Give me leave to add, what I am morally certain is true, that the very Men who now clamour on these Pretences, against entring into any Expedients *as yet*; would have been lowder than any other, in their Invectives against the Legislature and the Ministry (as Men regardless of every thing but their own Ease, and taking no Care of the Safety of the People,) in case the Court and Parliament had sat still, and judg'd it too early as yet to enter into the Consideration of it.

3. Again; When the Plague has enter'd any Country, or is approaching to it, the Duty incumbent upon the Publick Administration, is to take Care of the *Whole*; nay, it is their Duty *not* to take farther Care of any one Part, than is consistent with the Care of the Whole; and (as a Consequence of this) not to lay aside any proper Provisions against its spreading thro' the Whole, because such Provisions may bring Inconveniencies upon any Part. This, most certainly, is the Duty of the *Publick Administration* in every Country; but when *particular Persons* come to reason upon the fitness or unfitness of such Provisions for the *Whole*, their single Rule of judging, is a Concern for *Themselves*. They think it grievous and unreasonable to be shut up within Lines or Houses, among Persons infected; but they consider not, how grievous and unreasonable they would think it (in case themselves were *without* the Lines, and among the

the *uninfected*) if the Publick should take no Care to hinder the Part already infected, from mixing with them. And so, in Case of removing the Person infected from his House; Men consider how grievous it would be to *themselves*, if it were done; but they never consider how grievous it would be to a *whole Street*, if it were not done. On the same Foot, stands the Case of Persons infected in *Lone-houses*: How much soever has been heard, within doors or without, of the Unreasonable-ness of removing such; I dare say, there is not any one Inhabitant of such a House, who, if he dwelt in a great Town or City within five Miles of it, would not have been under the utmost Uneasiness, and have thought it the most unreasonable thing in the world, if Provision had been made in the A&t, that no infected Person in any *Lone-house*, should be remov'd into a more solitary Place, or to a greater Distance from Towns or Cities. Nay, there is not a large Town or City in his Majesty's Dominions, however zealous at this time against all Breaches upon *English Liberty*, but would burn *Magna Charta* it self, should it pretend to tell them, that a great *Body of People* must be put in Danger, or even Terror, for the Ease and Convenience of one Family, or perhaps one Person.

4. Another false way of Reasoning about these Provisions for preventing the Plague, is, That Men view and consider some one Scheme, *singly* and by *it self*, and do not compare it with other Schemes, to see which is attended with the *least* Terror and the *fewest* Inconveniencies. If they will not be content, till a Scheme is offer'd that shall be strictly consistent with Law, and Liberty, and Ease; this is to resolve, in effect, that they will be content with none at all; because (as it has been often remembred in this Paper, and ought above all things to be inculcated, upon this sub-ject,) all Expedients whatsoever (all that have been, and all that can be thought of) are very terrible. And as it follows not, that this or that particular Expedient is not good, or not the best, because it ap-

pears to be terrible; so the true way of Reasoning, is, to consider which Scheme appears *least* terrible, and *most* effectual, upon an impartial Comparison of them, in all the Steps to be taken in the Execu-tion of each; and then to embrace that, which how terrible soever it may be in it self, appears upon such Comparison to be less terrible, and more effectual than any other. And it is unaccountable, how it should ever be wrought into the Heads of Men, that either a Legislature or a Ministry can have a *Partiality* for one Scheme above another, for any Reason, but be-cause they judge it to conduce most effe-ctually to the one single end of prevent-ing the Plague; In other Words, that they should offer a terrible Expedient for any Reason, but because it appears to them upon the Comparison, to be *less* terrible than any other that will be effectual. And except the People in making a Judgment upon any Scheme that is proposed, will resolve to found such Judgment upon a fair Compara-tion of that with *other* Schemes, the Dis-satis-factions must be endless; and it will require great Courage in those who are to act in pur-suance of the General Powers vested in the Crown, to establish or propose any Ex-pedient at all, and will lay them under a dangerous Temptation, to chuse, not what is really best in it self, but what is most suited to the Humours of the People.

5. There is another thing which greatly contributes to lead Men into very false and unjust Reasonings in this matter; and that is the suffering *other* Considerations to mix with it, which yet in their Nature are wholly foreign to it. Ought any Expedient that is offer'd, to be the worse thought of by this or that Person, because he happens to be a Sufferer by the *South-Sea*? Can a Scheme be either better or worse in it self, because it comes from Whig or Tory Hands? Does it follow, that any Scheme which is propos'd, ought not to be app-rov'd and receiv'd, because the *damning* it may help to render a Ministry unpopular, or be of Service in the approaching Elec-tions? Multitudes of those who now join in the popular Clamour, have, I doubt not, been

been *wholly* determin'd in this matter by such foreign Considerations (whether of domestick Losses, or political Views,) without entring in the least into the Reason of the thing it self, or troubling themselves at all to *survey* and *compare* the several Expedients. Whereas, it is most certain, that till such foreign Motives are banish'd out of the Case, and much more till they cease to be the *ruling* Motives; it is impossible for Men to form a Judgment about it, that shall be either wise, or honest.

6. Farther; In reasoning upon this Matter, Men do not seem to attend enough to the Consequence of the Nation's being found in an *unprepared* and *undetermin'd* State, in case we should be visited and attack'd by this terrible Enemy: Which, like all other Enemies, ravages whatever Country it can *surprise*, without Opposition or Controul, and by that single Advantage, is able to do great Execution, and to Destroy a long time, before any Head can be made against it. This was the melancholy Case of the People of *Marseilles*; they were surpris'd by it, and Multitudes were lost before the publick Administration could fall into proper and regular Methods of opposing it; who by a *previous* Consideration and Establishment of such Methods (if there had been time for it) might certainly have been sav'd. And tho' this *need* not be our Case, who have so fair warning of our Danger; yet by our Folly we may *make* it our Case, if we go on to indulge the Humour we are got into, of putting the Evil-day far from us, and discouraging the Thoughts of any Expedients at all, because no one can be found but what is exceeding terrible. It is certain, the very Thought of the Plague even at this distance, is dreadful; and not to think of it at all, would be the wisest Part we could chuse, if our not thinking of it would keep it at a Distance. But when it pleases God to give us so long a warning, and we have time (if we will but use it) to consider calmly of the best Expedients, and to digest them into proper Order and Method, while our Thoughts are yet free from that Terror and Confu-

sion, which will necessarily attend a more immediate approach of the Plague; in these Circumstances, there cannot be a greater Folly in the World, nor a more shameful Instance of Supineness and Stupidity, than to neglect the happy Opportunity which God gives, and to delay the Preparations for our Defence till the Enemy is upon us. As if a time of such Terror and Confusion, were a Season for calm and regular thinking; or a Work of such a nice and difficult Nature, could be consider'd, digested, and executed in a Day. I speak this with the greater Concern; because however some Expedients which have been already under publick Consideration, have been forc'd to yield to publick Clamour and Discontent, and the Provisions are now reduc'd to the *General Powers* vested in the King; yet if this Humour continues among the People, of not bearing the thoughts of any Expedient that is attended with Terror, and no Expedient can possibly be found but what is very Terrible, I see not how any Fruit can be expected from these General Powers, nor who they are that will have the Heart to execute them, nor that any Scheme they can propose, is like to meet with better Treatment from the Populace, than what we have already seen. It is a grievous State we are in, if we have no way to avoid the *future* Confusions inseparable from an unpreparedness when the Plague comes, but the being run into *present* Confusion by attempting to prevent them.

7. I am aware, that there are some among us, who account all Endeavours to prevent or oppose the Plague, vain and ineffectual, if not impious; and this, upon two different Principles: One, that the Plague is the immediate Hand of God, and therefore not to be resisted; the other, that it is not propagated by Infection from Persons or Goods, as other Distempers are, and that therefore all Provisions against such Infection are lost Labour. But as it is certainly a wrong Notion in Divinity, that any Judgments whatsoever which are not *expressly* denounc'd by God, are his immediate Hand, in such sense as to forbid or supersede all human Means of preventing them;

them; so is it at least a new Notion in Philosophy, and contrary to the general Observation and Practice of Mankind, that the Plague is not propagated by Infection, like other Distempers of the same Nature. And since the Persons who have entertained these Opinions, are generally such who have no ill Meaning, no pre-meditated Design to inflame the Nation; I am very sure, they will be so candid, as to consider how weak our Governors must appear both at Home and Abroad, should they sit still and sacrifice the Safety of the Nation to a pious Error in Divinity, or a new Speculation in Philosophy, when both are so contrary to the general Apprehension and Practice of Mankind.

However, thus far we readily agree with them, That the Plague is attended with such Degrees of Malignity, and diffuses the Contagion with such Force and Swift-ness, as render the best Endeavours of Man less effectual in this, than in any other Distemper. And would to God we were all agreed in the plain and proper Inference from hence, That the less resistible it is by the Art of Man, the greater need we have to fly to God for Protection and Deliverance. As zealous as I am for a timely Deliberation, what are the best Expedients that *Reason* can suggest; I should think it by far the most comfortable Presage of Safety to the Nation, if I could see Men betake themselves in earnest to the *Religious* Means of averting divine Judgments; and affected with such Seriousness towards God, and Charity towards one another, as might well be expected from a People who have the Plague hanging over their Heads: If in particular, I could see among us a more peaceable and Christian Spirit, free from Hatred, Revenge, and Prejudice; and a Disposition in Men to judge in all Cases impartially and candidly: and finally (as one Instance of such Impartiality and Candor) if I could see, that one in a thousand of those who are provok'd by their late Losses,

would seriously examin his own Heart as to the *Motives* which carried him into that unfortunate Adventure; and, to his just Censures of the Knavery of others, would add a due Humiliation of himself before God, for his own boundless Avarice and Ambition.

To conclude; It was not the Design of this Paper, to enter into particular Schemes, or to espouse or recommend one Scheme above another. My only Aim was, to lead honest and well meaning Men to reason more fairly and justly upon this Subject, than I think they have hitherto done; and for that end, to shew how shamefully they have been misled, by false *Facts*, by groundless *Suspicions*, and by unjust *Reasonings*.

As to those who are Enemies to the Government, I offer none of these Considerations to *them*; nor can I in reason expect that they should alter their present Methods, either of thinking or acting, in this matter, because on their part it would be most unpolitick, if they did not labour Night and Day to blow up our Discontents higher and higher, in hopes at last to cast us into a State of Confusion. But what I have said upon this Subject (with great Truth as I believe, and I am sure with great Sincerity) I offer to the Friends of the Government only; who, as wishing its Continuance, are also bound to wish its Peace and Welfare. And as I shall esteem it a great Happiness, if any thing that I have said, may conduce to bring such Persons to a Course of more just and sober Reasoning; so I must entreat, and even conjure them, to enter upon an impartial View of this whole Matter, and to consider how they can answer it to God, their King, and their Country, if for want of such Reasoning, or in spite of it, they still suffer themselves to be led on by mere *Passion* or *Prejudice*, to do the Work of the common Enemy.